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SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON PALESTINIAN ELECTION, SUDAN
PEACE SIGNING,

Summary

-- Lead story in all papers published today, January 10, focuses on the "landslide" victory of Mahmoud Abbas in the Palestinian presidential elections. Another lead story highlights the signing of a final peace agreement in Sudan.

Editorial Commentary

-- "The Palestinian elections, Jerusalem and the refugee issue"

Columnist Lamis Andoni writes on the op-ed page of independent Al-Ghad Arabic daily (01/10): "The voting process [in the Palestinian presidential election] showed an Israeli-American determination to nullify (Palestinian rights in) Jerusalem and the right of return.. Yesterday was difficult for the Palestinians of the Diaspora who felt excluded from the Palestinian decision-making process and who see a possible loss of the right of return under the terms of Oslo, American-Israeli pressure and an Arab acquiescence of America's (terms for) peace. Some analysts and politicians suggested that refugees of the Diaspora be given the opportunity to participate in legislative and presidential elections in order to give them a role in the Palestinian decision-making process. I disagree with that for a number of reasons, particularly because the Oslo agreement gave the Palestinian Authority responsibility for all Palestinians, though not representation of them as America and Israeli acknowledge the representative authority of the Palestinian Authority only when it comes to ending the Intifada and making concessions. The most significant issue is that the participation of the Palestinians in the Diaspora in these conditional elections would have had serious repercussions later on when the time comes to negotiate final-status issues. That will be when America and Israel pressure the Authority to abandon the right of return. So, participation of the refugees in this election would, in effect, nullify their rights, because this participation would be understood as providing a mandate for the elected president to make decisions that could harm their fate."

-- "The future of Sudan in light of the recent agreement"

Columnist Rana Sabbagh writes on the op-ed page of independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad (01/10): "After a civil war that lasted 21 years, claiming the lives of 1.5 million people at least and displacing another 4 million, the Sudanese president and the People's Army leader signed a final peace agreement. The agreement, signed in front of representatives from African countries and the United States, is hoped to put an end to the longest conflict in the African continent. Yet this agreement, like other developments expected to take place in Iraq and Palestine, will be the beginning of many long-term challenges that the Sudanese and those around them will have to deal with if peace, stability and justice are to reign. The issues of human rights and political and economic reform constitute the beginning of those challenges.. Sudan needs to put in place a work plan to meet these challenges while this atmosphere of optimism and hope is still alive."

-- "Israel is everywhere"

Columnist Samih Ma'aytah writes on the back-page of independent Arabic daily Al-Ghad 901/10): "Day in and day out, Israel proves to be a major part in most of the crises and points of tension in the Arab Nation, not just in Palestine, but in all areas of the Arab

world where killing and fighting is taking place. Recent news confirmed the Mosad's involvement in stirring the fires of war and killing in the Sudanese Darfur crisis, as well as the Israelis' recruitment and training of rebel parties and the smuggling of weapons to them.. More importantly, Israel and other international forces worked on providing political support for rebel forces, while turning these issues into international issues and forms of political, military and economic pressure on the Sudanese government.. Iraq is an arena turned by the American occupation into free land for the Zionist army and the Mosad. Mosad experts are present in the American occupation forces' operations against Iraqi citizens, be it through the invasion of cities and homes or assassinations and bombing perpetrated by Israel in order to ignite the fire of dissension, plant fear and entrench sectarianism. More importantly, there are within the U.S. administration people who view Iraq's future through Israeli eyes and from the viewpoint of Zionist interests.. Israel is an aggressive state, be it through direct military occupation or through security and economic maneuvering or the intensification and escalation of problems. It has no qualms about taking advantage of wars or peace treaties in order to expand its circle of influence and inflict harm on all that is around it. Aggressiveness is part and parcel of this entity.."

-- "Legitimacy is the starting point of freedom and dignity!"

Daily columnist Tarek Masarweh writes on the back-page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (01/10): "The problem today is not the elections. The problem is the occupation, as much in Palestine as it is in Iraq. As for the search for legitimacy, the Israelis, the Americans or the British know that legitimacy in times of occupation is the legitimacy of resistance, and nothing else.. The stance of the Sunnis towards the American occupation is not much different from the roadmap's handling of the [Israeli] withdrawal. What Washington and Tel Aviv want is elections first, leading the way for the rise of a 'reasonable' government that would grant the occupation approval by portraying it as supporting liberation, independence and self-determination! America and Israel view legitimacy (in Iraq and Palestine) not as something that determines the national fate of the state; but rather the acceptance of air bases on Iraqi soil or security zones on the River Jordan; a legitimacy that accepts foreign dictations at the expense of the freedom, dignity and independence of the homeland! Democracy must never be (used as) the starting point of national submission."

HALE